

SECRET

25X1

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

USIB-D-28.5/9
5 September 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : A Report on Intelligence Alert Memoranda

REFERENCE : USIB-D-28.5/8, 9 January 1975

The Director of Central Intelligence has requested that the attached draft report on the subject be placed on the USIB agenda for discussion at the meeting of 11 September 1975.

25X1

Executive Secretary

Attachment

Exempt from general declassification schedule of E. O. 11652, exemption category 5B(2). Automatically declassified on: date impossible to determine.

Warning Notice
Sensitive Intelligence Sources
and Methods Involved

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| KEY FINDINGS | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| DISCUSSION | 9 |
| The Threshold: A Fundamental Issue | 10 |
| Too Many or Too Few? | 12 |
| Community Involvement | 14 |
| Terminating the Warning | 17 |
| Toward More Standardization? | 18 |
| CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 20 |
| Annex A - Review of the Production Process for Individual Alert Memoranda | |
| Annex B - USIB-D-28.5/8, dated 9 January 1975 "Procedures for Alert Memoranda" | |

SECRET

SECRET

25X1



A REPORT ON INTELLIGENCE ALERT MEMORANDA

1 September 1975

Prepared by the

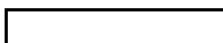
Product Review Division, Intelligence Community Staff

25X1

| | |
|--|--|
| CLASSIFIED BY | |
| EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION | |
| SCHEDULE OF DECLASSIFICATION EXEMPTION CATEGORY: | |
| \$ (Select one or more) | |
| AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON | |
| date impossible to determine | |
| (unless impossible, insert date or event) | |

SECRET

25X1



A REPORT ON INTELLIGENCE ALERT MEMORANDA

1 September 1975

This study, prepared by the Product Review Division of the Intelligence Community Staff, responds to a request by the Director of Central Intelligence for a review of Intelligence Alert Memoranda produced to date. He wished to know both how well the system has served him and the community and how well it has served the high-level consumer.

KEY FINDINGS

In view of the numbers of persons who either were important recipients or had some role in producing Alert Memoranda, a unanimity of views on all aspects of this intelligence medium was neither expected nor achieved. There was, however, substantial agreement among both producers and senior-level consumers on the following key points:

-- The basic concept of the Alert Memorandum (AM) is sound. Those that have been produced to date have by and large done what they were designed to do.

-- Alert Memoranda are being seen--and their message noted--by principals and senior aides in the national security decision process; they are not being short-stopped by lower-level staff mechanisms.

~~SECRET~~

-- The system is not being seriously abused by over-use. Given the circumstances which led to their preparation, few of the fifteen Alert Memoranda so far produced are judged to have been hasty or ill-advised. In general, those consulted judged this on the whole to be a good record.

-- Conversely, no serious charges have been leveled at the community for neglecting the AM form when it might have been used. (One possible such case--the Mayaguez incident--was mentioned by one respondent, and this point is discussed later in the paper.)

-- There was general recognition among most of those interviewed that the production process has evolved--and improved--with the passage of time and as experience in this form has been gained.

Nevertheless, differences of view--some fundamental in nature--surfaced on a number of points of form and substance. The more important of these are:

-- There are varying perceptions of the appropriate criteria for selecting particular situations to be handled by Alert Memoranda. This reflects a lack of consensus on the relative weights that should be placed on how important the subject is to US interests, how quickly it needs to be addressed by policy councils, and how likely it is to occur.

-- Some respondents suggested that it would be helpful to have a more standardized format--one that had better attention-getting qualities and that ensured each AM uniformly addressed certain questions. Others emphasized the values of an unconstrained form and style.

-- Although the AM was designed as a community mechanism--and the NIOs have sought the views of other agencies when time permitted--the Alert Memorandum is still viewed by many to be either a CIA product or as

~~SECRET~~

reflecting a personal concern of the DCI rather than of the community. Close involvement by other agencies in recommending or participating in producing Alert Memoranda has been minimal--far less than we judge to have been the goal of the DCI and the USIB in establishing the system.

The findings are covered in greater detail in following sections, and recommendations are set forth beginning on page 20. The recommendations themselves are relatively minor. Indeed, the flexibility of the process has been important to its evolution and we see little need to introduce major new restrictive or prescriptive provisions.

An exception involves a few practices that have grown out of experience in producing Alert Memoranda and that now have become normative to the process. They should--in our view--be codified in the "Procedures for Alert Memoranda" (see Annex B). There are three of these:

- The practice of speedily notifying Washington area intelligence operations centers as soon as a decision has been made to produce an Alert Memorandum.

- The practice--when time permits--of promptly notifying US embassies and other appropriate field elements in the geographic area discussed that an Alert Memorandum is in process, with an invitation for comments and suggestions.

- The practice of electrically disseminating the finished paper to those same embassies and field elements.

SECRET

In addition, we believe community participation would be made easier if--following close behind notification of other agencies that an AM is being prepared--the responsible NIO would forward to those same agencies an LDX statement briefly covering the salient facts of the case, including critical source references and a statement of the intended thrust of the paper.

The remaining recommendations for the most part can be met if the DCI and USIB place heavier emphasis on existing procedures to try to meet problems seen by some of our respondents. USIB discussion, for example, might help to clarify some of these issues. This particularly applies to the question of how to achieve greater community involvement in initiating and producing Alert Memoranda.

SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/22 : CIA-RDP80M01133A000800060010-4

Next 43 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2004/12/22 : CIA-RDP80M01133A000800060010-4